



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: K–4 Reading Levels

2017

Authorizing legislation: RCW 28A.320.203

(<http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.320.203>)

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Executive Summary

Based on data from 91 percent of elementary students in grades K–4, over 33.6 percent of students in the reporting districts are reading below grade level.

The major partners in the work to measure K–4 reading levels are:

- English Language Arts (ELA) staff at Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
- Learning Assistance Program (LAP) staff at OSPI.
- Regional Literacy Coordinators who represent the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD).

Over the past year, these partners provided professional learning opportunities at state-, regional-, district-, and school-level events.

These professional learning opportunities focused on:

- The importance of using the [English Language Arts Menu of Best Practices and Strategies](#) (ELA Menu) for evidence- and research-based practices.
- Understanding and using Implementation Science.
- Enhancing educators' understanding of literacy development.
- Using strong instructional practices through a multi-tiered system of support.

The appendices detail the methods used to support student literacy development. The data shows the popularity of strategy usage. This year the lead partners will continue working with educators to shift and add to their best practices.

Background

The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5946 ([SB 5946](#)) in 2013. The bill set forth a vision for improving educational support systems for every student in grades K–12.

School districts, schools, and educators were informed of the legislative requirements through professional development opportunities at regional educational service districts (ESDs) and state conferences, and through personal phone calls, emails to district offices, and formal correspondence from the OSPI including the following:

- [B022-17, April 2017](#)
- [B014-16, April 2016](#)
- [B068-15, December 2015](#)
- [B003-15, February 2015](#)
- B065-14, December 2014 ¹
- B040-13, August 2013

2013 SB 5946—Strengthening Student Educational Outcomes

Part I of [SB 5946](#)—Learning to Read, Reading to Learn—was implemented during the 2014–15 school year across the state through OSPI and AESD. The 2013 law focuses on the importance of collaborative partnerships essential to supporting students by using evidence- and research-based programs for all students, especially in grades K–4, and providing statewide models to support school districts in implementing a multi-tiered system of support. The law also highlights the importance of research-based family involvement and engagement strategies. This law requires school districts to be responsible for providing a comprehensive system of instruction and services in reading and early literacy ([RCW 28A.320.202](#)) that must include annual use of screening assessments to determine the reading levels and support instruction for students in grades K–4.

In addition to supporting students, Part I of the law identifies how essential professional learning ([RCW 28A.415.400](#)) is for educators to enhance and expand their instructional practices and understand early literacy development. During March of 2016, the Washington State Legislature expanded on this belief and passed House Bill 1345 ([HB 1345](#)) providing Washington with a shared, statewide definition of professional learning in order to advance student outcomes.

¹ To request copies of these bulletins, please email Communications at commteam@k12.wa.us

Identification of Students Reading Below Grade Level

Districts and schools were required to identify students' reading levels according to the evidence-based state and district assessments that were employed in their classrooms and schools. Districts and schools were encouraged to make data-based decisions from multiple measures and to incorporate professional understanding of individual students' learning trajectories.

Reporting of Students Reading Below Grade Level

For the purpose of the requirement in [RCW 28A.320.203](#), each school shall report to the school district the number of students in K–4 who are reading below grade level and the intensive reading strategies and/or interventions that are being provided to improve the reading skills of the students, with the information disaggregated by subgroups of students.

Per the requirements in [RCW 28A.320.203](#), by August 1, 2016, Washington school districts were expected to report to OSPI:

- 1) The number of students in grades K–4 who were reading below grade level.
- 2) The intensive reading strategies and/or interventions being provided to improve the reading skills of these students.

The K–4 Literacy Report, accessible through the Education Data System (EDS) portal, was developed to collect the required data. Users identified students reading below grade level from a comprehensive list of all K–4 students who were continuously enrolled in the same school during the 2016–17 school year. Students who were identified as continuously enrolled have been enrolled from October 3, 2016 through the end of the school year in June 2017, with no more than a 30-day consecutive calendar break in enrollment.

In compliance with [RCW 28A.320.203](#), 258 of the 295 Washington school districts (88 percent) reported the reading levels of their K–4 students (See Table 1 and Table 2).

Update Status

Table 1: 2016–17 K–4 Students Identified as Reading below Grade Level by Grade Band

Grade Band	Total K–4 Continuous State Enrollment	K–4 Enrollment for Reported Districts	Number of Students Identified as Reading below Grade Level	Percent of Students Identified as Reading below Grade Level	Percent Not Meeting Standard on SBA ELA Statewide (Level 3 or 4)
K	73,609	67,819	20,359	30.0	--
1st	76,396	69,456	22,822	32.9	--
2nd	79,133	71,882	23,675	32.9	--
3rd	81,217	73,800	26,740	36.2	49.7
4th	81,008	73,734	26,134	35.4	49.6
Total	391,363	356,691	119,730	33.6	--

Data reported as of: 8/14/2017

Sources: CEDARS and 2016–17 K–4 Literacy Report in EDS

Table 2: K–4 Students Identified as Reading below Grade Level by Student

Subgroup	K–4 Enrollment for Reported Districts	Number of Students Identified as Reading below Grade Level	Percent of Students Identified as Reading below Grade Level
All Students	356,691	119,730	33.6
Female	173,490	54,451	31.4
Male	183,201	65,279	35.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	4,330	2,440	56.4
Asian	27,134	6,133	22.6
Black/African American	13,692	6,755	49.3
Hispanic/Latino	82,340	39,796	48.3
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3,288	1,541	46.9
White	194,941	53,782	27.6
Two or More Races	30,942	9,279	30.0
Bilingual	61,719	33,287	53.9
Free and Reduced Lunch	169,654	74,673	44.0
Homeless	8,658	3,979	46.0
Learning Assistance Program (LAP)	88,483	53,312	60.3
Migrant	5,693	3,275	57.5
Special Education	47,993	25,670	53.5
Title I	53,562	29,434	55.0
Title VII	1,815	991	54.6
Unaccompanied Youth	297	113	38.0
504 Plan	7,970	2,571	32.3

Data reported as of: 8/14/2017

Sources: CEDARS and 2016–17 K–4 Literacy Report in EDS

Conclusion and Next Steps

The data reported by schools is one measure of students' literacy development in Washington. OSPI looks forward to working with districts to support strategies to help students achieve grade-level standards.

For the 2017–18 school year, OSPI will support districts by doing the following:

- Upon request, support districts in reviewing their literacy plans and assist in the selection of aligned literacy curriculum and assessments using evidence-based rubrics.
- Disseminate and provide professional learning on the [English Language Arts Menu of Best Practices and Strategies](#) and [Pathways to Early Literacy](#).
- Encourage ongoing professional learning for educators and administrators.
- Support districts with their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) alignment.
- Encourage discussions around the use of multiple measures including the use of classroom, formative, and interim assessments to ensure a student's progress is captured in a variety of arenas.
- Provide opportunities for learning at the state and regional levels in collaboration with the Association of Educational Service Districts.

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